ROBERT KIRKMAN LORENZO DE FELICI MATHEUS LOPES

VOID RIVALS

image

#07

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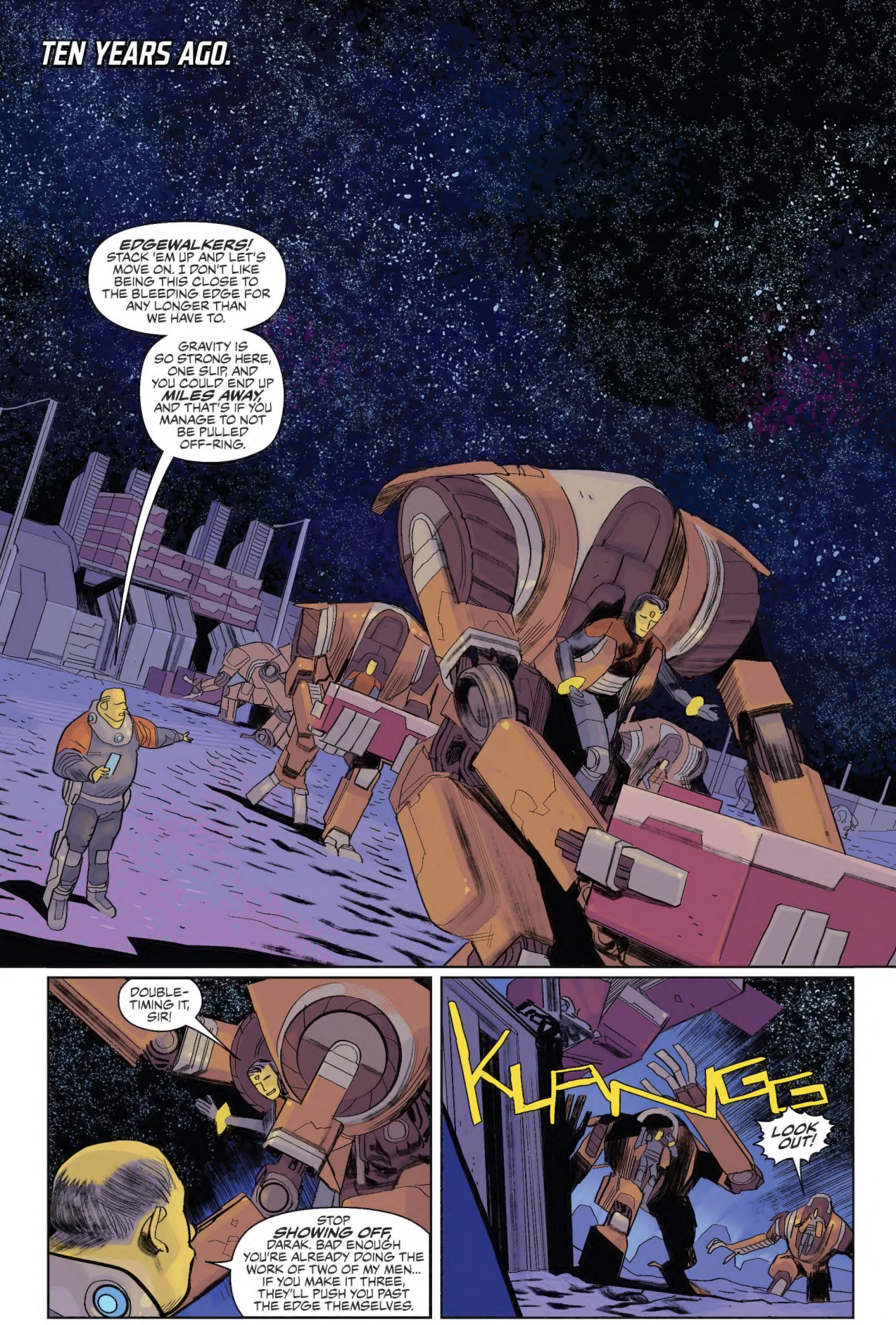

TEN YEARS AGO.
EDGEWALKERS! STACK 'EM UP AND LET'S MOVE ON. I DON'T LIKE BEING THIS CLOSE TO THE BLEEDING EDGE FOR ANY LONGER THAN WE HAVE TO.
GRAVITY IS SO STRONG HERE, ONE SLIP, AND YOU COULD END UP MILES AWAY, AND THAT'S IF YOU MANAGE TO NOT BE PULLED OFF-RING.
DOUBLE-TIMING IT, SIR!
STOP SHOWING OFF, DARAK. BAD ENOUGH YOU'RE ALREADY DOING THE WORK OF TWO OF MY MEN... IF YOU MAKE IT THREE, THEY'LL PUSH YOU PAST THE EDGE THEMSELVES.
KLANG
LOOK OUT!

I GOT YOU!
KRAKWRAKK
WRAMMM
DARAK--
NO!
KLANK
NO, NO!
VZZZZZZZZ

VZZZZZZZ
OH, MAN.
OH, MAN.
OH, MAN.
SKEEEEEEE
CRAP!
CRAP!
WRAMM
KRASKK
=UGH.=

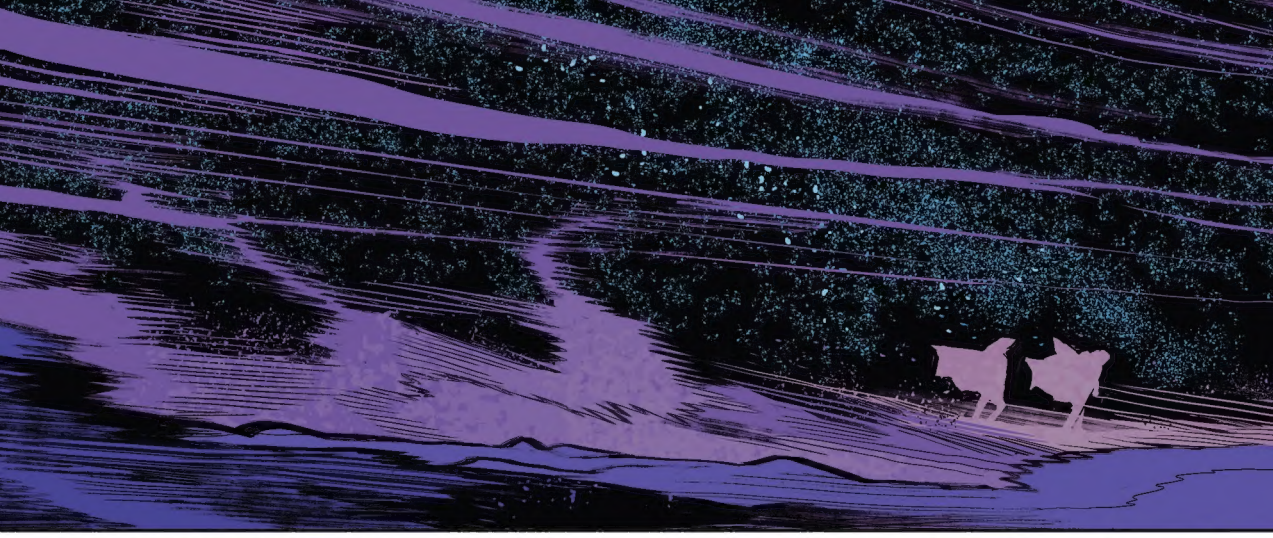
CRAP.

SO... YOU'VE LED US TO THE WASTELAND, WHERE NO ONE WILL FOLLOW... FOR GOOD REASON. NOTHING SURVIVES OUT HERE, DARAK.

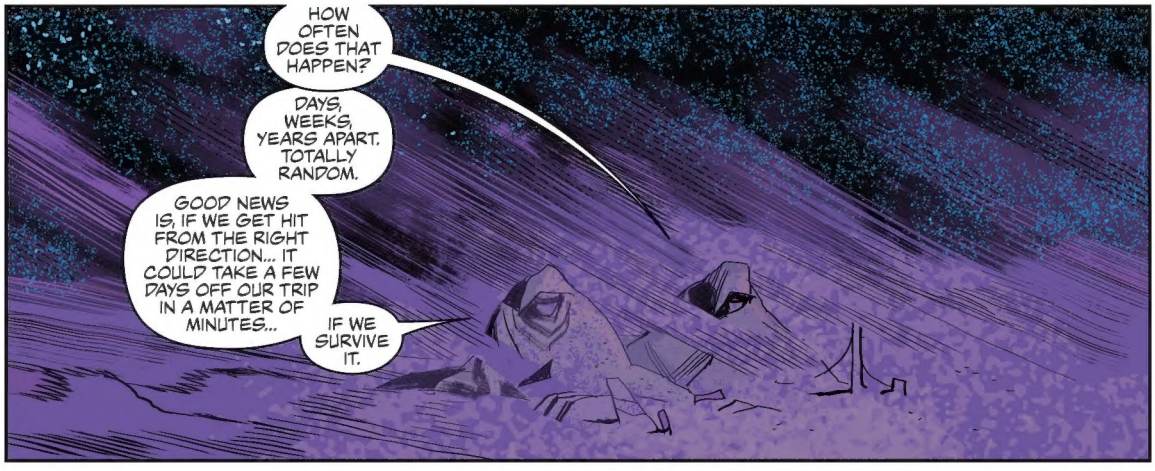
DID YOU HAVE A *PLAN?*

I'VE BEEN HERE *BEFORE.*

THAT...
IS NOT A PLAN.
I CALCULATE THE SHORTEST PATH ACROSS THE WASTELAND WOULD TAKE A MINIMUM OF THREE MONTHS TO REACH AGORRIA.
WITH STRICT RATIONING, YOUR FOOD RESERVES WILL LAST YOU FOUR TO SIX WEEKS. SOULA IS RIGHT TO BE WORRIED.
THAT'S JUST IT... WE ONLY HAVE TO GO ABOUT HALFWAY.
ROUGHLY.
I KNOW WHAT I'M TALKING ABOUT. I THOUGHT YOU TRUSTED ME. LIKE I SAID, I'VE BEEN HERE BEFORE.
THAT DOESN'T SOUND MORE COMFORTING THE MORE TIMES YOU SAY IT. IF ANYTHING... LESS SO.
YOUR PLAN IS TO... DIE HALFWAY TO OUR DESTINATION?
IF I TOLD YOU, I SWEAR YOU WOULDN'T BELIEVE ME... EVEN AFTER WHAT WE SAW ON THAT PLANETOID WHERE WE FIRST MET.
COME ON. WE'RE WASTING TIME.
FINE.
IF EACH STEP BRINGS ME CLOSER TO BEING RID OF YOU... LET'S GO.



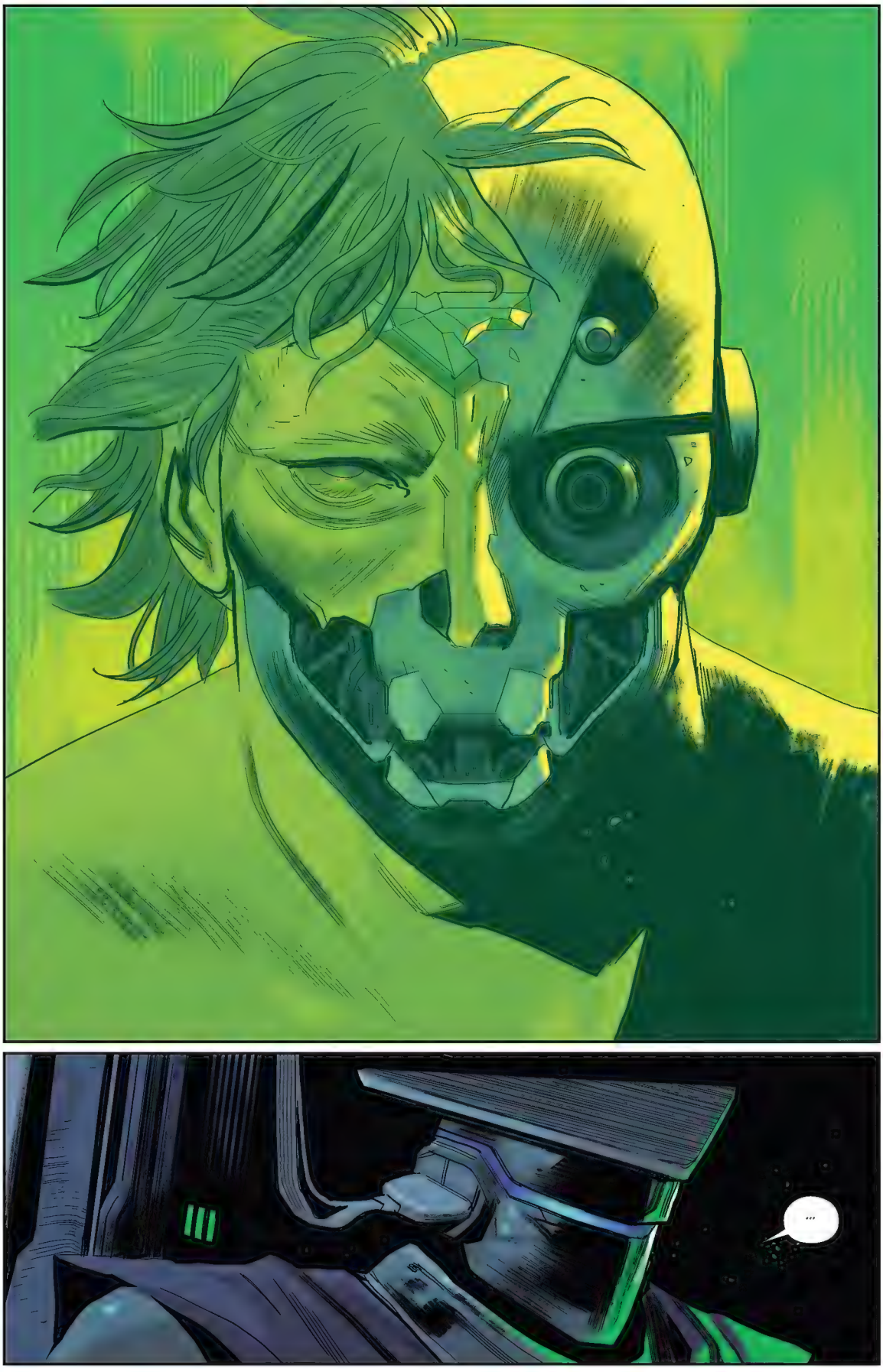
WINDS ARE APPROACHING DEADLY SPEEDS.
SOLAR WINDSTORM.
LATCH IN.


HOW OFTEN DOES THAT HAPPEN?
DAYS, WEEKS, YEARS APART. TOTALLY RANDOM.
GOOD NEWS IS, IF WE GET HIT FROM THE RIGHT DIRECTION... IT COULD TAKE A FEW DAYS OFF OUR TRIP IN A MATTER OF MINUTES...
IF WE SURVIVE IT.

I DON'T UNDERSTAND.
WHAT'S TO UNDERSTAND? IT'S REALLY VERY SIMPLE. AN AGORRIAN HAS ***CORRUPTED***,, ONE OF OUR ZERTONIAN WARRIORS. THEY'VE JOINED FORCES AND HAVE FLED TO THE WASTELAND.
YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE ***BRAVE*** ENOUGH TO PURSUE THEM...

BRAVE, OR CRAZY, FOOLISH, AND EASY TO MANIPULATE?
YOU'RE NOT GOING TO WIN ME OVER WITH FLATTERY. I'M NOT THE MAN I WAS WHEN LAST YOU SAW ME. I'VE... IMPROVED.
I CAN SEE THAT.
THERE IS LITTLE TIME FOR A BACK AND FORTH. IF THERE'S A PRICE FOR YOUR SERVICES, YOU CAN JUST NAME IT SO WE CAN MOVE ON.
DO I DETECT A HINT OF... PANIC IN THE VOICE OF WISE ZALILAK? FIRST CHOSEN OF ZERTA'S EMBRACE? PRIDE OF ALL OF ZERTONIA?
IT MUST BE SOMETHING SEVERE TO CAUSE SUCH REACTION FROM YOU.
...
YOU THINK I HAVEN'T READ THE SACRED TEXTS? THAT I DON'T KNOW OF THE THREAT THAT HAUNTS YOU.
NO. YOU'RE SMARTER THAN THAT. I NEVER GAVE YOU ENOUGH CREDIT. THE GENIUS YOU HIDE BEHIND YOUR BRUTISH STATURE.
YOU KNOW I KNOW.
IF YOU BELIEVE I WISH TO PREVENT THE COMING OF GOLIANT AS MUCH AS YOU DO... YOU WOULD BE CORRECT.

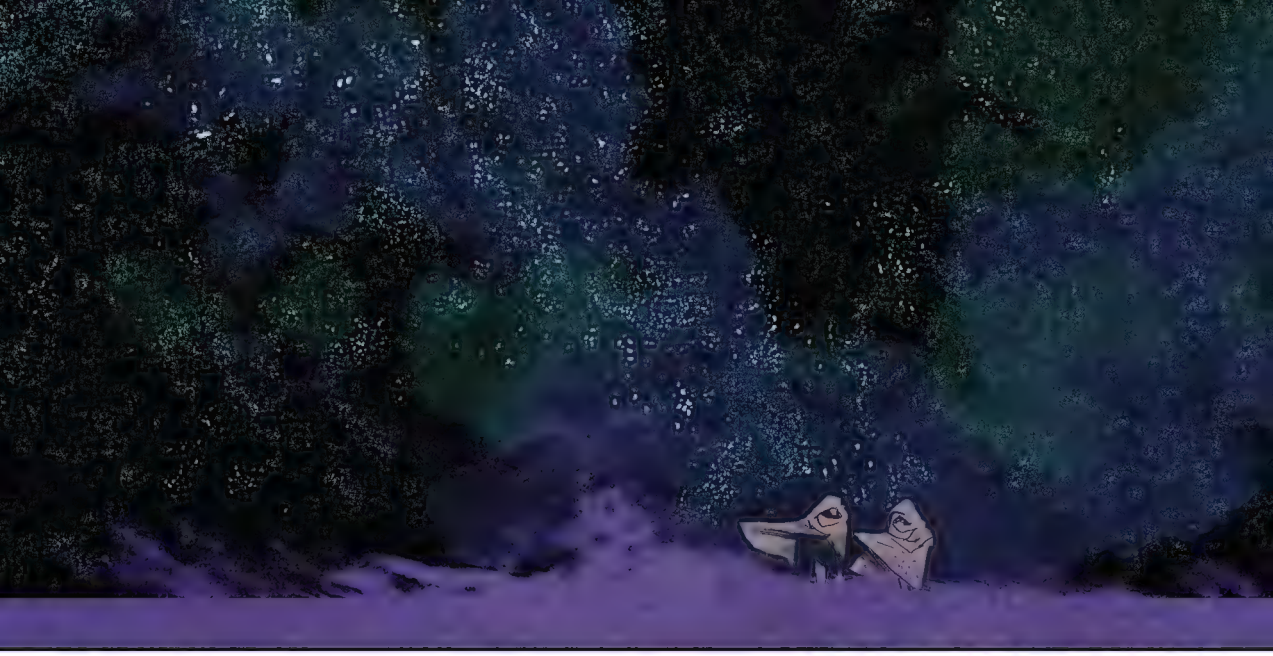
I WILL DO AS YOU ASK.
I WILL HUNT THESE TWO YOU SPEAK OF, AND I WILL END THEM, BUT I MUST ASK...
WHAT IF I TURN AGAINST YOU ONCE MY TASK IS COMPLETE?
OUR LAST CONFRONTATION WAS UNPLEASANT FOR BOTH OF US. I TRUST YOU REMEMBER.
I ALSO ASSUME YOU HAVE COME TO ENJOY YOUR TIME HERE. IT SUITS YOU WELL, YOU SEEM... HAPPY.
BESIDES, IN YOUR CURRENT STATE, WHAT LIFE WOULD FREEDOM AFFORD YOU?



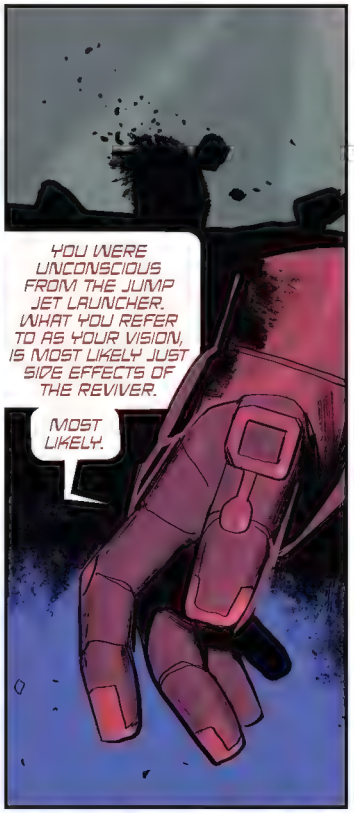
HE HAS AGREED.
RELEASE HIM, GULAN.
YES, SIR. AT ONCE.
MAY ZERTA HAVE MERCY ON US ALL.

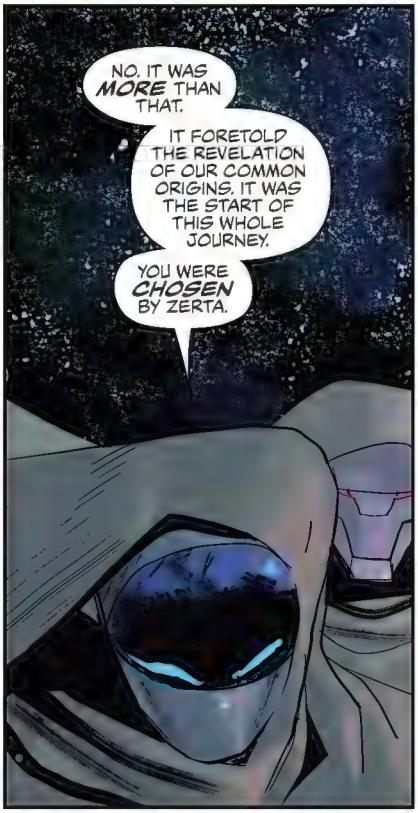
WELCOME BACK, PROXIMUS.
I WILL TAKE MY LEAVE.
THE LESS TIME SPENT IN YOUR PRESENCE, THE BETTER... FOR BOTH OF US.

I'LL TRANSFER THEIR LAST KNOWN LOCATION.
NO NEED...
...I HAVE ALL THAT I REQUIRE.
ZERTA...
SAVE US...
PULL YOURSELF TOGETHER, GULAN.
YOU COWER LIKE A CHILD. HE IS BUT A MAN.
SIMPLY THE MOST DEADLY OF US ALL.



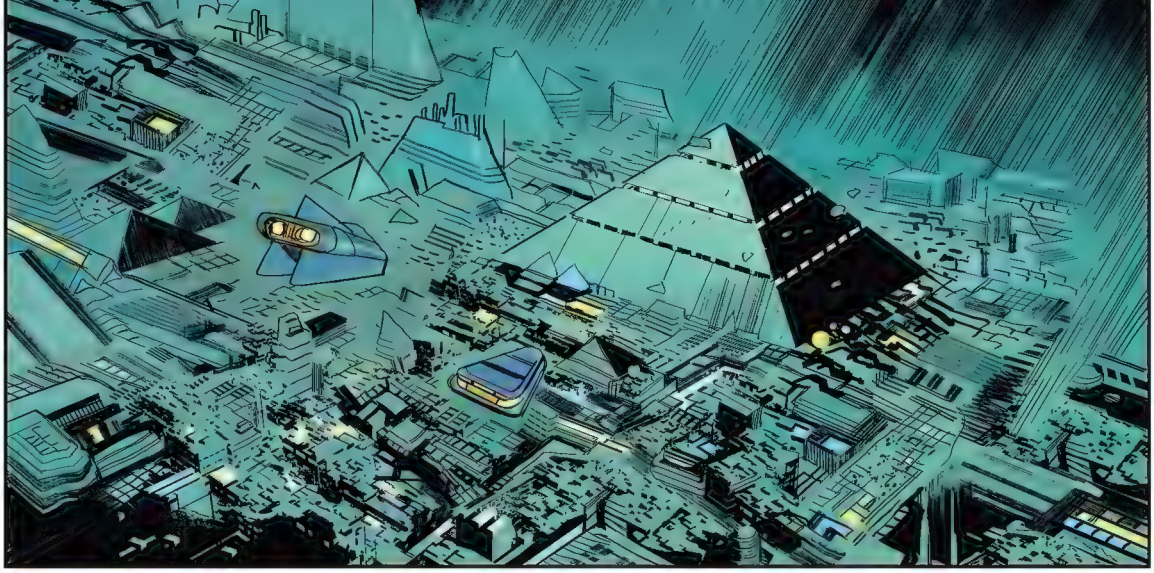
TELL ME MORE OF YOUR VISION.
WHAT'S MORE TO SAY? I TOLD YOU LITERALLY EVERY DETAIL I REMEMBERED. CREEPY VOICE. WE USED TO BE THE SAME, WE NEED TO UNITE AGAIN.


YOU WERE UNCONSCIOUS FROM THE JUMP JET LAUNCHER. WHAT YOU REFER TO AS YOUR VISION, IS MOST LIKELY JUST SIDE EFFECTS OF THE REVIVER.
MOST LIKELY.


NO. IT WAS MORE THAN THAT.
IT FORETOLD THE REVELATION OF OUR COMMON ORIGINS. IT WAS THE START OF THIS WHOLE JOURNEY.
YOU WERE CHOSEN BY ZERTA.

IF YOU SAY SO.

SOLILA? YOU OKAY OVER THERE?
I'M FINE.
WHAT'S THAT?
IT'S NOTHING.



MISTRESS VILL?! YOU SUMMONED US?
IT IS HAPPENING.
SOLILA IS ON THE PATH OF HER CALLING... AND HER DESTINATION... IS DRAWING NEAR.

TALK TO THE HANDROID

SEND YOUR QUESTIONS TO VOIDRIVALS@SKYBOUND.COM

Hi folks, welcome back to the start of a brand-new arc. Editor Sean here, trekking across my own hazardous wasteland of deadlines to get you this issue… as we introduce PROXIMUS. What an introduction! I love Darak and Solila, but I also can't wait til see what Proximus does to them. Is that perverse? Sure.

It's going to be glorious! Writer Robert here! Still cooking up more horrible things for Proximus to do in future issues. Hopefully he's a welcome addition to the Energon Universe we all love so much.

Let's answer some mail, shall we?!

• • • • • • • • • • • • •

Hello VR team,

Really enjoying the series! My question is will we be seeing more of Skuxxoid and Slizardo from issue #3 anymore? Kirkman has this ability in a few pages to really make one care about these side characters.

David Gehring
Kenosha, Wisconsin

Great question! I will gladly point to ENERGON UNIVERSE SPECIAL 2024, releasing on Free Comic Book Day, then shut my mouth. A question of my own, Robert: did you ever think Skuxxoid would be seen so much this early in the EU?

That FCBD special is just the tip of the Skuxberg. There is SO MUCH SKUXXOID coming. Like a RIDICULOUS amount. Like... so much, it might be a bad idea. But I love him... hopefully you love him, too. Because, man... if you don't... look out.

• • • • • • • • • • • • •

Dear Void Rivals Team,

This is my first time sending an email and asking questions about the comic series! As a Transformers fan, the new series Void Rivals is getting really exciting showing the alliance with the Transformers.

I was so glad that the past relationship between the Quintessons and the Cybertronians are mentioned in issue 4, and finally the planet Quintessa appeared in #5, released today! It reminded me of the Transformers Aligned universe(including TV series Transformers Prime, several other books and games), where Quintessons initially ruled Cybertron as their colony.

I was curious if you got some references from the Aligned universe when making Void Rivals. Will some stories between the Cybertronians and the Quintessons be revealed in this new series? Did they also once ruled Cybertron as their colony, but then retreated after the revolution(or war maybe) of Cybertronians? What about Zertonia and Agora-did they once related to the Quintessons, too?

All good questions, that we can't answer here.

Also, I would like to say that there are many readers in South Korea (where

I'm living!) looking forward to the Void Rivals series! When the preview of #5 was released, Mistress Vill and Solila got little attention from our fandom society-the design, the saying, everything. Hope they will come back in the next issues, too!

That's cool! As you see on this final page, Mistress Vill isn't going anywhere soon.

Thank you always for the great comic, and I'll be waiting for the answers.

From Seoul, Korea

Sincerely,
Gyeonglee Park

Thanks for writing, Gyeonglee! The goal with the Energon Universe is that we'll pick and choose the best stuff from previous continuity of Transformers and G.I. Joe to combine into a really cool cohesive universe. So we can't really answer a lot of your questions because there's a LOT to reveal, and there's some really cool things that are going to happen along the way as we reveal it.

. . . . . .

Hello Everybody!

It's Paul G. again! Thank you so much for printing my letter back in Issue #4! Having a letter written of mine published in a comic written by one of my favorite authors means the WORLD to me!

But anyway, onto questions. I got to see you, Sean, and the rest of the Energon Universe creators at NYCC earlier in October, and it was a dream come true to see. It was so cool to see you two, Sean, DWJ, and everyone else talk about your creative processes for each of your comics! After having just read issue 5, I gotta say I am HOOKED on Darak and Solila now as characters. I'd argue they've got the chance to be just as popular as Rick Grimes or Mark Grayson in a few years!

Blasphemy! But also... I'm ready for it.

Here's my first question: Can we expect to see more of Agorrian society in the future on the same level as we've seen Zertonian society in the past two issues? I absolutely love Kanela, and would love to see an Agorrian equivalent to them!

Stay tuned! I mean, it'd be weird if we didn't, right? I mean, we did see a little of Agorria in issue 2.

Second: Do Zertonians have some sort of AI that is similar to Darak's Handroid? I'd love to see Solila have some sort of equally plucky sidekick. Maybe BootBot?

Nope!

Third: Can we just have every issue of Void Rivals going forward have a three-four page side story with Skuxxoid on some misadventure? You're making me love this guy so much, I never thought I'd enjoy him this much!

Let's up the ante and just commit to giving him a solo spotlight issue. Would that make you happy?

So much Skuxxoid coming...

Anyway, that's it for my letter! Hope you enjoy your hiatus! I can't wait to see what you all are cooking up for your big return in March next year! Oh, and for another Letter Column name suggestion, how about "Null and Void"?

Take care.

Paul G.
New Jersey

Null and Void... I don't hate it! But I think we already have a winner, right? It's at the top of the page right now, isn't it? I feel embarrassed.

. . . . . .

Heya folks,
Just finished Void Rivals #5 and I am loving the world-building here! I'm holding out hope for the Quintesson-Skuxxoid buddy cop story. I'm super excited to see where the Energon Universe goes, it definitely feels well-connected even this early. I love that you're taking all the weird stuff from the 80s cartoons and thinking on what the implications would be.

Speaking of, do you have any plans to use the "weird" aspects of the GI Joe file cards later on? E.g., Buzzer being a sociologist, Cobra Commander being an ex-used car salesman, Raptor being a tax consultant, and probably weirder things I can't remember!

Allegra Van Rossum
Oshkosh, WI

If it makes sense for the story, sure… so maybe check out COBRA COMMANDER #3 on sale later this month, for more info on Buzzer.

. . . . . .

Hello to everyone working hard to make this amazing comic book. Just finished issue 5 and… wow. One has to wonder how is Mr. Kirkman able to just keep writing at this level of excellence.

But after the great story, and with my focus on the letter page (which now I definitely think should be called Manufacturing conflict in the Sacred Ring) I couldn't but notice that every single letter focused on the relationship between this story and the Transformers franchise, and a bit Kees but also the G.I. Joe franchise and I wondered if that is your intention or would you prefer for this to gain a fandom of its own, for this to be able to be read and enjoyed without the need to be relying on people knowing that it's part of the Energon Universe and the readers expecting the next cameo or reference to those franchises. And I don't ask this as a criticism, I love Transformers since I was a child and I loved issue #1, just genuinely curious of how much is this planned to stand on its own and how much it's going to rely on the support of the existing franchises.

Thanks again for this awesome series and for showing me how much I need a Handroid in my life.

Rodrigo Levin
Mexico City, Mexico

The goal here, Rodrigo, is to create a shared universe that could stand shoulder to shoulder with what Marvel and DC have built over the last... near... century... heh... but really since the 70s and 80s. So for instance, Wolverine was created long after the X-Men, and while his popularity is vast, it's connected to the lore of the X-Men. Or a better example would be something like Thunderbolts or Runaways. They were new, they stood on their own, but they're part of a larger universe. VOID RIVALS stands on its own, can be read on its own, and will make sense by itself, but there's a lot going on outside of it and it might be fun to experience that, too, if you so choose.

It'll be kind of like reading Spider-Man and then, bam, Silver Surfer shows up out of nowhere sometimes. You don't really need to know who the weird silver guy is. The story will still be fun.

For me, the whole point of this is getting to not only play in the Transformers and GI Joe sandbox, but to also get to add to it with new characters and concepts.

. . . . . .

That's it for this month. We'll be back next month as Darak and Solila venture further into the wasteland... with Proximus hot on their trail.

-Sean Mackiewicz

Oh, boy! It's going to be nuts! See you back here real soon!

-Robert Kirkman

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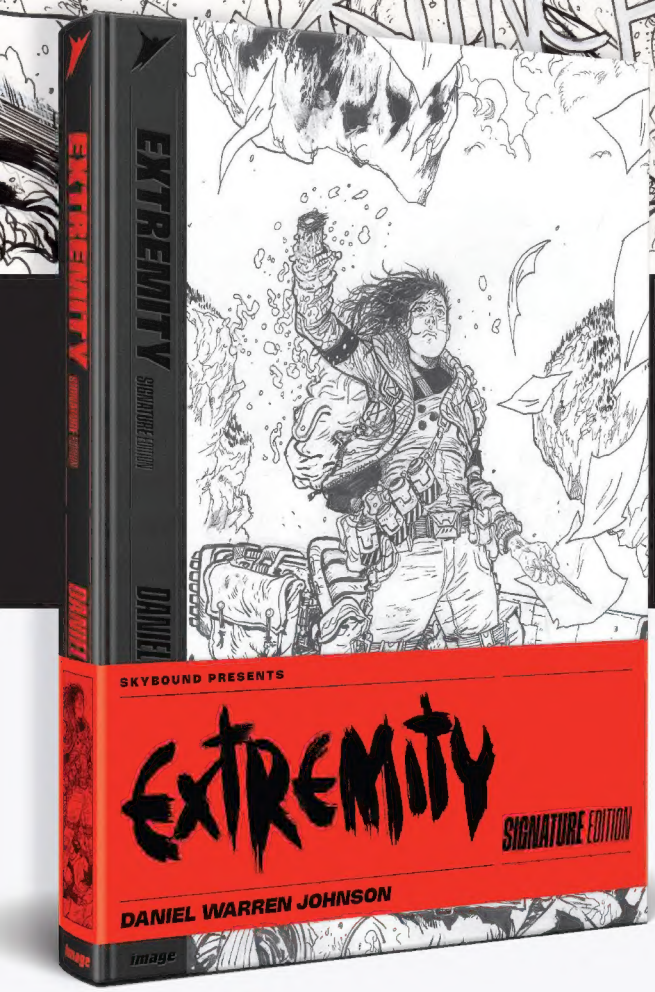

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